

WASHINGTON, D.C. - This past May, Representative Xavier Becerra (CA - 30) introduced legislation that would rename the Oakwood Post Office in his district after the late Nat King Cole. His legislation, H.R. 4797, which has 65 co-sponsors including the entire California delegation, was debated by the House of Representatives yesterday and subsequently passed by a unanimous voice vote.

"Nat King Cole remains an icon as one of America's most beloved entertainers," Rep. Becerra said during yesterday's floor speech. "H.R. 4797 is but a small token of appreciation that will forever give memory to his work and his love of this country. His story is one of determination, courage, and resilience. We recognize him today as one of the pioneers who left his mark in an industry that is now part of the fabric of Los Angeles. However, Nat King Cole did not always have an easy road. He was not immune to the intolerance of the time. Indeed, as we look at his impressive songbook, we cannot forget the struggles he had to overcome as an African American performer during a difficult period of our nation's history."

Rep. Becerra decided to write the legislation after multiple discussions with constituents in the Oakwood neighborhood of his district. "The fact that we are designating this post office after a legend is truly due to the people who live in and around the area of 265 South Western Avenue," Rep. Becerra said. Over 15 years of the music legend's life was spent living within miles of the post office proposed to be named after him. "It was the folks who live in the community that surround this area who chose Nat King Cole as the person to pay tribute to and name this post office after. I want to thank all of them for having stepped forward, and in a very democratic process, decided that it was best and most fitting to name this post office after a former resident of the area, and certainly a man that we will all remember."

California Senator Dianne Feinstein has agreed to take the legislation up in the Senate. For the redesignation to become official, the legislation must pass in both houses of Congress and subsequently signed by President Bush. Rep. Becerra is confident that his legislation will become public law before the 107th Congress adjourns later this year.

"Nat's name will be up on the marquee sooner than even I imagined," Rep. Becerra said.